

through imitative suggestibility. People who are very suggestible can be led into states of mind which preclude criticism or reflection. Any one who acquires skill in the primary processes of association, analogy, reiteration, and continuity, can play tricks on others by stimulating these processes and then giving them selected data to work upon. A directive idea may be suggested by a series of ideas which lead the recipient of them to expect that the series will be continued. Then he will not perceive if the series is broken. In the Renaissance period no degree of illumination sufficed to resist the delusion of astrology, because it was supported by a passionate fantasy and a vehement desire to know the future, and because it was confirmed by antiquity, the authority of whose opinions was overwhelmingly suggested by all the faiths and prejudices of the time.¹

25. Suggestion in education. Manias. Parents and teachers use suggestion in rearing children. Persons who enjoy social preeminence operate suggestion all the time, whether intentionally or unintentionally. Whatever they do is imitated. Folkways operate on individuals by suggestion; when they are elevated to mores they do so still more, for then they carry the suggestion of societal welfare. Ways and notions may be rejected by an individual at first upon his judgment of their merits, but repeated suggestion produces familiarity and dulls the effect upon him of the features which at first repelled him. Familiar cases of this are furnished by fashions of dress and by slang. A new fashion of dress seems at first to be absurd, ungraceful, or indecent. After a time this first impression of it is so dulled that all conform to the fashion. New slang seems vulgar. It makes its way into use. In India the lingam symbol is so common that no one pays any heed to its sense.² This power of familiarity to reduce the suggestion to zero furnishes a negative proof of the power of the suggestion. Conventionalization also reduces suggestion, perhaps to zero. It is a mischievous thing to read descriptions of crime, vice, horrors,

excessive adventures,
 etc., because familiarity lessens the abhorrent suggestions
 which those
 things ought to produce. Swindlers and all others who
 have an interest
 to lead the minds of their fellow-men in a certain direction
 employ sugges-
 tion. , They often develop great practical skill in the
 operation, although
 they do not understand the science of it. It is one of the arts
 of the dema-
 gogue and stump orator. A man who wanted to be
 nominated for an office
 went before the convention to make a speech. A great and
 difficult question
 agitated the party. He began by saying that he would
 state his position

¹ Burckhardt, *Renaissance*, 512. ² Nivedita, *Web of Indian Life* ^
 212,